

## Ventura County Star

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### \$213 billion transit plan for region is approved

April 2, 2004

SAN BERNARDINO (AP) -- A regional agency on Thursday approved a \$213 billion transportation plan designed to curb gridlock on freeways and improve airports and train stations that serve more than 17 million people in six counties.

The Southern California Association of Governments approved the plan called Destination 2030, which is designed to help the region accommodate rapid growth while trying to make the most of limited funding.

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A photograph of a modern, single-story house with a white garage door and a green lawn.

The report will be forwarded to several federal agencies, including the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration, for approval. It would then be certified and reviewed by SCAG every three years, said the board's executive director, Mark Pisano.

The plan provides a blueprint for the region's transportation needs over the next 25 years. Projects in Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura counties must be included in the report to be eligible for state and federal funding.

Some of the investments and recommendations listed in the report are:

- Connecting carpool lanes to fill gaps in its network.

- Improving regional airports.

- Increasing the capacity of Metrolink.

- Investing in a \$29 billion high-speed rail system that uses magnetic levitation technology and would connect Southern California's largest cities.

Planning officials admit that improving transportation while California is mired in a fiscal deficit could be difficult. But the report suggests the funding shortfall could be alleviated by extending some county sales taxes that are expected to be phased out; adjusting the state gasoline tax after 2010; and passing a Los Angeles County half-cent sales tax that would be used for its Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

On the Net:

Southern California Association of Governments: <http://www.scag.ca.gov>

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